



July 2016

Statement to Support RAD Site Activities in Western New York

The United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 has been investigating potential radioactive slag contamination in the soils associated with three properties located in Niagara County since the fall of 2013. They include a residential apron on a private driveway in the Town of Lewiston, NY; a cemetery access road and undeveloped property associated with the Holy Trinity Cemetery in the Town of Lewiston, NY, and a bowling alley/wholesale building materials property on Niagara Falls Boulevard, Niagara Falls, NY.

In 1978, the U.S. Department of Energy surveyed the Niagara Region by air for radiation and found these properties with low levels of radioactive materials. It is believed that in the early 1960's, a glass-like, granulated by-product called "slag" from former industrial facilities was used as fill material at all three locations. The area at the residential apron and Niagara Falls Boulevard locations are covered with asphalt/blacktop and the cemetery is covered with a layer of soil. The fill material contained "technologically enhanced natural occurring radioactive materials", which are industrial by-products enriched with low levels of radioactive elements found in the environment.

In early 2013, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Department of Health referred the sites to EPA Region 2. EPA conducted pre-remedial assessment activities in the winter of 2013 to determine if these sites would qualify for placement on EPA's National Priorities List (NPL). Those assessments indicated that none of the sites would be eligible for inclusion on the NPL. However, two of the three sites (the cemetery and bowling alley/wholesale building materials property) did qualify for further assessment under the EPA removal program.

In the summer of 2015, EPA performed a gamma radiation survey of the two locations. At the Niagara Falls Boulevard site, EPA collected soils samples and detected elevated levels in several areas within an unoccupied portion of the building supply building. These areas were portions of the building that were add-ons to the original structure and were constructed on top of the asphalt parking lot. The occupied interior space of the bowling alley was found not to be contaminated.

EPA conducted further samples at the Niagara Falls Boulevard location in 2016 and is currently involved in a removal effort that calls for the removal of the contaminated soils under portions of the building supply building and removal of contaminated soils from the surrounding parking lots. EPA fenced off the vacant areas at the cemetery and is awaiting test results.